**Dorchester Parish Council**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th August 2019 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman, Cllr Mark Williams, presided; present were Cllrs. Mike Corran, Maurice Day, Chris Hill, Mike Rimmer and Keith Russell with G Russell (Clerk to the Council) in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were District Cllr Robin Bennett and one resident.

1/8 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Rob Ballantyne, Viviane Quirke and County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale

2/8 Public Participation

Val Howells, the Parish Council’s nominee as Village School governor, reported that the funds raised by the Playground Appeal had now reached £10,500, including £3,000 from the Parish Council and £2,000 from the County Council. She hopes to receive a grant from the Co-Op and other fund-raising activities are continuing. The target is £15,000 and the planned installation date is the October half-term holiday.

Val Howells also asked about the status of the pavement alongside Abingdon Road. If this is an officially recognised cycle track could the appropriate signs be installed?

3/8 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Mark Williams concerning village maintenance work that is carried out by any company with whom he works, principally grass-cutting and grounds maintenance.

4/8 Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th July 2019

Following a note from Cllr Mike Rimmer a spelling error in the circulated minutes was put right and the minutes as amended were approved and signed as a true record.

5/8 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Repairs to Cheyney Lane; the Clerk said that he hopes to walk the path with the new Area Inspector in the near future.

b. Bus Shelter; the concrete anchor post has been moved and the Clerk will progress the project with Trevor Greenaway.

c. It was agreed that the email from Malcolm Corry suggesting new parking controls in the High Street should be sent to County Highways for comments.

d. The Council noted that the wooden post outside 1a High Street has been replaced following the visit by County Highways Officer Jon Beale

e. It is understood that the replacement gates for Abbey View Meadow will be fitted soon. The gates will have the same closing system as before.

f. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Village Hall bookings officer and arrange the Newcomers Evening for a Thursday in the second half of February.

g. The County Highways Inspector, Mark Pearce, has told the Clerk that the broken BT manhole cover at the High St/ Queen St junction will be repaired very soon.

6/8 County Councillor’s Report

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale’s written report for August has been circulated.

7/8 District Councillor’s Report

District Cllr Robin Bennett said that discussions continue about the future of the current 2034 Local Plan with work continuing on issues which have arisen because of the Climate Change emergency. He hopes that the situation will be resolved by October. An affordable housing plan is being developed. The District Council is now officially opposing the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Expressway.

The Councillor Grant Scheme is open again with each Councillor having an allowance of £5,000. Applications should be made on-line. The Capital Grant Scheme will return but it is not yet open to applications.

8/8 Council’s Four-Year Vision

Three priorities are emerging. First is the desire to improve the appearance of the village and the Council is willing to seek advice from professional assessors as well as other parish councils who enter such things as competitions for the ‘best kept village’. Second is to achieve an improvement in communication between the Council and the residents and, again, the Council is keen to learn how this has been achieved by other local communities. The existing Parish Council communication tools such as the Village website and Facebook should be better publicised.

Thirdly there is a desire to improve the facilities offered at both the Village Hall and the Sports Pavilion. The Council will support the Hall Trustees and Management Committee as they seek planning permission for significant improvements and raise funds for development work to commence in 2020. The inclusion of an office for the Parish Clerk is part of this development and gives the Council a particular interest.

The Sports Pavilion lacks any form of management structure and putting one in place is the Council’s first priority in the improvement programme.

The idea of increasing the areas of land registered in the Council’s name has been considered, especially plots alongside the path which leads from Drayton Road to The Hurst Water Meadow, but this is not considered to be a project with high priority.

9/8 Planning:

i. Applications: no new Applications had been received.

ii. P19/S1825/FUL Land to the east of Oxford Road and North of Minchin Recreation Ground. It was agreed that the letter received from the Planning Officer Paul Bowers contained an accurate summary of the Parish Council’s views about the conditions that should be imposed if planning permission is granted.

iii. Affordable Housing Project Progress Report

The competition to find a name for the proposed development off Abingdon Road will appear in September’s ‘Dorchester News’. It will close on 30th September and the selected name will be submitted to SODC for final approval.

10/8 . Finance:

i. Bank Balances

Current Account balance at 30/7 £36,138.08

Reserve Account balance at 5/8 £47,972.61

£84,110.69

The following payments were approved;

Michael Lynes Jeweller Ltd (gold bar for Chairman’s chain) 54.00

Interior Design Services (Bridge End phone box) 138.00

Q Transport (Oxford) Ltd (Container rental) 92.76

Oxfordshire County Council (Flyer) 187.50

South Oxfordshire District Council (dog waste bin service) 124.32

The Landscape Group Oxford (July grass cutting) 1,228.20

Southern Electric (Pavilion) 139.04

Playsafety Limited (annual inspection) 177.00

Playground Appeal 1,000.00

Neil Willis (strimming) 87.50

Geoff Willis (Village Handyman) 350.00

G Russell (salary) 549.65

Solid Art (repair to bench outside Co-Op) 540.00

£4,667.97

11/8 Financial Regulations / Standing Orders; Review Current

The Council’s Standing Orders dated February 2015 and the latest model Financial Regulations were circulated in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Mike Corran and seconded by Mike Rimmer that the new model Financial Regulations should be adopted; Mike Rimmer proposed and Mike Corran seconded the re-adoption of the current Standing Orders. Both these motions were passed unanimously.

12/8 Correspondence with Chairman and/or Clerk

a. The Council noted that there have been complaints about the condition of the Bridge End Public Lavatories. This facility is maintained by contractors supervised by the District Council.

b. The Council has been invited to send representation to a steering committee of the Neighbourhood Development Group which comprises parishes with an NDP. The Council had no one who could attend this meeting, but it was noted that the Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan would be reviewed in 2020.

c. The Council has confirmed that it is happy with the current election arrangements involving the use of the village hall as a polling station.

d. The village webmaster has advised the Council that the free update service for the events calendar is due to become chargeable. Further information will be requested.

13/8 . Status of Waterloo and land behind 13 Bridge End

There is no further progress to report.

14/8 Land Registration

The Clerk is progressing a second War Memorial application via Wellers Hedleys.

15/8 Village Maintenance including Volunteer Projects

Some more grass verges in the High Street are now included in the contractors’ schedule. The Chairman and Cllr Chris Hill are in direct contact with Andrew Clements and his team of volunteers concerning the projects to maintain land close to Page Furlong and in the Cemetery.

16/8 Routine Reports:

a. Sports Pavilion, recreation Ground & Playground;

The Clerk will talk to Steve Aplin about his firm carrying out the routine maintenance tasks that were identified during the Play Area Equipment inspection in July.

b. Footpaths;

Mrs Jackson has offered a contribution of £200 towards the cost of reducing the tree near her property in Martins Lane. This tree is adjacent to electricity supply equipment and, in the absence of a known landowner, the Parish Council feels that the professionally recommended tree maintenance work has to be carried out even if it is primarily at the Council’s expense. Mrs Jackson’s offer will be gratefully accepted, and the tree will be felled. Liaison with the electricity supply company will commence.

c. Cemetery/Closed Churchyard;

Cllr Keith Russell said that he is about to introduce a variant of the ‘Adopt A Grave’ scheme to be called ‘Improve A Grave’. This will be promoted in ‘Dorchester News’.

A Councillor raised his concern about a new gate being installed by a Page Furlong resident whose garden backs on to the Cemetery. It was agreed no action is required but the use of this gate will be monitored.

d. Allotments

Nothing to report.

The meeting closed at 9.43 p.m.